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North Dakota Farmers Union

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August 4, 2005

Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave. SW
Washington DC 20250

Dear Secretary Johanns,

On behalf of over 30,000 North Dakota Farmers Union members, thank you for coming to our state for the USDA Listening Session held at the ND State Fair July 26th.

We appreciated the chance for our members and friends to be able to tell their story of how farm policy is working and to describe their vision for future farm bill priorities.

I hope you heard how concerned we are about improving producer income and strengthening the safety net through improved crop insurance, updated loan rates and countercyclical payments, targeting of farm payments, the importance of conservation and renewable energy titles, rural development funding, and the need for fair world trade agreements that support farmer and rancher net income.

We especially agree with many of the audience members that renewable energy in all forms is good for agriculture and will help our national security. The energy bill now in Congress and the upcoming 2007 farm bill should both be catalysts for a much larger renewable energy system. We think ethanol, bio-diesel, wind, and many other forms of renewable energy all should be priorities in future farm policy.

Again thank you for listening to North Dakotans discussing farm bill issues. As you said, many of the best ideas come from the heartland. We look forward to working with you to improve the economic well-being of farmers, ranchers, and their communities.

Sincerely,

NORTH DAKOTA FARMERS UNION

Robert L. Carlson
President

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